

**Middletown School Readiness Council**  
**Wednesday, November 16, 2016**  
**Wesley School**  
**10 Wesleyan Hills Rd.**  
**Middletown, CT 06457**

**Members Present:** Betsy Morgan, Dawn Dubay, Sheila Daniels, Monica Belyea, Ed Bonilla, Jerome Long, Christine O'Grady, Izzi Greenberg, and Lina Kronenberger. Also Present: Michelle Peterson.

**I. Welcome, Call to Order & Announcements:** Betsy Morgan opened the meeting at 12:15.

**II. Acceptance of the October 2016 School Readiness Council meeting minutes:** Monica Belyea moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Amy Waterman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**III. Financial Report and Facilitator's Report/Updates:** Dawn distributed the financial report, noting full day/full year slots continue to be filled. The Y reported two open slots again this month, but is hopeful that those slots will be filled soon. Discussion around opportunities to assist in filling those slots took place. Suggestions made included looking into school bus transportation, especially if a preschool child has a sibling at the same school. The question arose around the possibility of a YMCA staff member riding the bus to monitor the preschoolers on board.

Another topic of discussion centered around recruiting younger siblings. Efforts could be made to collaborate and get the word out of the resources available. MAE, Child First and FRC shared info on the issue. Connections between agencies are strong and efforts are made to communicate with one another. Ideas shared.

**Care4Kids Update:** Dawn reviewed the remaining information in the report. Care4Kids funding changes are already impacting programs as outlined in the report. Amy noted Birth to 3 is also facing challenges. Efforts should continue on encouraging families to apply so as to show the need for the program, but there is even confusion around that and what resource people are being told to do or not to do.

Dates to keep in mind: Nov, 18th 10:00 a.m. Appropriations Committee hosting a session on deficiencies in Birth to 3, the impact on their funding due to autism rise and support for that. It was noted OPM may cut funds to Birth to 3 program. Nov. 29th 3:30 - 4:30 rally organized by union, to support \$15. min. wage. Dec. 7th 10:00A.M. a parent and provider forum will be held at the LOB - need legislative representatives and senators there to hear testimony

Another event with the date and time to be determined, - Organizing Lights Out for Child Care - one day at a specific time programs will shut down and go outside with posters for 20 minutes to make a statement.

**Quality Enhancement:** Question arose around Quality Enhancement funds and the new training regulations for family day care providers and the impact of that expense. More discussion took place.

Quality of staff issues has also created concern for School Readiness programs. There are still glitches in the computer system database. The state is buckling down on programs that out of compliance.

**Recent Election:** Conversation around the election results and the loss of Sen. Dante Bartolomeo as a child advocate took place. Early childhood advocates will have to focus on newly elected legislators to inform them on key issues. It was noted that a unified message from the Alliance and communities throughout the state is important. Messaging around child safety and jobs.

**Pre-K -K Collaborative Update:** Dawn noted preschool teachers will be visiting the kindergarten classrooms once again, under the PreK - K group. Dawn was pleased to share the addition of Tender Care to the participating programs in this exchange and they will also participate in Prek - K meetings.

**Russell Library News:** Wendy noted Kitty Robinson has retired and the Assistant Director is acting as interim in this position. Wendy continues to work on the Russell Library Preschool Fair and announced this year it will occur on January 21st with a snow date of Jan. 28th. Wendy hopes to expand the list of participating programs. Christine asked Wendy to share info with the Council and other child related agencies so they can share with the families their programs serve. Betsy noted once the new librarian is in place, he/she will have to be added to the S. R. Council.

**ACES Train the Trainer a Update:** Lina, Amy and Dawn attended the ACES sponsored train the trainer program for dual language learners. Dawn is coordinating with the school district to incorporate this work into staff professional development. This professional development will initially be done within the PreK-K meetings or MECN evening.

**MECN Update:** Dawn shared information of upcoming MECN workshops. She and Dawn Abrahamson attended a yoga training and plan on sharing information garnered at an upcoming MECN workshop. Christine is conducting training with preschool programs around stress management, identifying emerging empathy in preschoolers. She is currently conducting Circle of Security training at Bright and Early and is receiving positive feedback. Circle of Security training will take place at the Y program this winter and Town and Country in the spring.

**New Leadership Training Opportunity:** Dawn informed the Council on the Leadership Program Curriculum & Instruction Assessment & Evaluation Leadership Cohort (through the OEC) on preschool leadership and advocacy. She noted this program has been recommended for all School Readiness liaisons and she has applied for entry into the program. She noted BOE preschool coordinator, Dawn Abrahamson, is participating in the current cohort and is finding it very valuable. The fee does present a barrier for some.

**MPS Pre-K to Grade 5 Health Curriculum Committee:** Dawn told the Council she is sitting on this committee as the preschool representative for the district. She shared some preliminary information around the work of this committee. Izzi suggested "consent" be a part of the curriculum. Brief discussion followed.

**Middlesex Coalition for Children Update:** Izzi reported that she presented (Middletown's Children Report) to the Common Council and they asked her for policy recommendations. She intentionally kept recommendations out of the report so as not to make it appear as an agenda. She noted now that challenge is on and could encompass anything and she would like to get a group together for conversation around recommendations to the City. Izzi noted we need to identify who is marginalized by policy and the need for targeted asks around employees at City, BOE and police levels. She'd like some ideas. Jerome asked if any focus would be around income and jobs. Izzi noted that is a good topic and maybe an urgent one for the City. She did mention Care4Kids and the impact of it as an issue. She asked how we'd like to proceed. Should we conduct conversation here within the Council or with other groups? Ideas may be sent to Izzi. Betsy noted the focus is on families and poverty and that it is important and encouraging that this

came out of Izzi's report on Middletown's Children. The report and response has been well received. Izzi thanked all involved.

The December meeting of the Coalition will focus on Care4Kids, with a panel discussion. Izzi noted we to get as many people to attend as possible. Izzi circulated two handouts on Care4Kids and will send out to Council members via e-mail.

She also mentioned a future Coalition meeting in January or February will host Walter Gilliam. He will present on the impact of poverty and the preschool classroom. Izzi mentioned DCF had a workshop on racial disparity and Walter presented there.

Izzi also reported she met with Jen Alexander, Director of KidCity. Jen noted it is hard to get Middletown families to come to the museum. Discussion followed. It was suggested passes or membership might be provided to families in Middletown. Izzi suggested people give the topic some thought for future meeting discussion with Jen.

Izzi noted she attended Facing Race Conference in Atlanta and found it powerful and people present were energized. One take away was to figure out how to focus this information on local government. She can share information with the Council. Christine thanked Izzi for her efforts.

New Council Leadership: Betsy noted she and Alice will be leaving their positions as co-chairs of the School Readiness Council and Ed Bonilla and Monica Belyea will be taking the helm. The Council thanks both Betsy and Alice for serving as co-chairs and congratulates Ed and Monica in their new roles.

Other News: Lina announced the Even Start Open House will take place on Dec. 7 from 10:30A.M. to 12:00P.M. All are welcome to attend.

**IV. Adjournment**: Monica moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:30P.M. Ed seconded and the motion carried. Betsy closed the meeting thanking those present for their attendance.

**The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on  
Wednesday, December 21, 2016**

**at**

**Wesley School**

**10 Wesleyan Hills Rd., Middletown, CT 06457**

**from**

**12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.**

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

Sheila C. Daniels